لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE

REVIEW

OF RELIGIONS

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ZAHUR, TABUK 1359—AUGUST, SEPT., 1980

EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

The Review of Religions

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAM

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions. Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

The Review of Religions

RABWAH, PAKISTAN

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Notes & Comments

Recently the Times, London reported that, 'one in 20 of the working population of Devon and Cornwall had a drinking problem'. In this report it is further mentioned that in these two counties there are 40,000 alcoholics. These sufferers frequently stay away from work on Mondays costing thousands of pounds each year in lost productivity. Apart from the loss of income alcoholism is a dangerous disease. Thousands of people die because of it. Many more lead a useless and miserable life being alcoholics.

This is beyond our comprehention that drug addiction should be condemned by a society whereas alcoholism should be permitted to develop which is as dangerous as drug - taking if not more. This hypocrasy has created a revolt among the younger generation of today. They ask the genuine question as to why the drinking of alcohol be not treated at par with the drugs by the society. Surely the harm and injury to health

resulting from both is of equal degree.

What we need today is to reform the alcoholics and the drug addicts and the total ban of all intoxicants of any nature.

Islam realised this problem 1400 years ago and had tackled it on the basis of reality and not hypocrisy as the modern West is practising. Islam totally banned the use of liquor and also all intoxicant drugs. Within the life time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) the Arab society got complete freedom from not only alcoholism but also all sorts of drug addiction.

——— o ———

The Ahmadiyya Movement is basically a missionary movement. Every Ahmadi has a burning desire to impart the knowledge of the Holy Quran and the message of Islam to others. Preaching has its own technique which must be followed if one would like to become a successful missionary. The Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him) has given a complete code in matters of preaching to us.

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Once I was busy distributing literature on an English beach when I was suddenly accosted by an old English gentleman who said, "Look here, young man. You wish that the people on the beach should read your literature on Islam. It would be a great thing if they did so. But I assure you that they would simply throw it away in the bins as they are not in a mood to read. Do you know why ?" This put me off and I was a bit confused. "These people" he continued, "have come here to enjoy themselves on the beach. They have no time to read any serious literature. They call it an interference of their leisure time. To invade it would be a downright folly. No doubt you have spent some money on its publication. Don't you think it is being wasted in this manner" ?

I, indeed agreed. I smiled my gratitude to him. I thought it over.

I realised that it was not the custom in that country to distribute any type of hand bills in the streets as it was so popularly and successfully done in other parts of the globe. My efforts on the beach came to a stop. I was despaired but not frustrated.

B. A. RAFIQ.

A Few Verses from the Holy Quran

الم ـ ذالک الکتاب لا ریب فیه ـ هدی للمتقین الذین یومنون
بالغیب و یقیمون الصلوة و مما رزقنهم ینفقون و الذین یومنون
بما انزل الیک وما انزل من قبلک و بالاخرة هم یوقنون اولئک
علی هدی من ربهم و اولئک هم المفلحون ـ ان الذین کفروا
سواء علیهم أ انذرتهم ام لم تنذرهم لا یومنون (2 : 1-7)

I am Allah the All-Knowing. This is the Perfect Book, in that there is no doubt ; it is a guidance for the righteous, who believe in the unseen, observe Prayer, and spend out of whatsoever We have bestowed upon them ; and who believein that which has been revealed to thee, and in that which was revealed before thee, and have firm faith in that which has been foretold and is yet to come. It is these who are firmly grounded in the guidance that has come from their Lord, and it is these who shall prosper. Those who have disbelieved it is the same whether thou warn them or warn them not, they will not believe. (2 : 1-7)

In this chapter obligations due to Allah and obligations due to His creatures are set out in great detail. Commandments and prohibitions have been expounded and great emphasis is laid on steadfastness and self-discipline. (Letter addressed to Munshi Abdullah Sannauri ; Maktoobat, Vol. V. No. 5, p. 150).

Of these seven verses attention must of course be first devoted to the first two, that is to say : I AM ALLAH THE ALL-KNOWING. This is the Perfect Book, which admits of no doubt ; a guidance for the righteous.

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Here at the outset the Source of the book is described

as ALLAH THE ALL-KNOWING, that is to say, He is the All-knowing, the All-wise. Whose knowledge and wisdom are all comprehensive ; no other can approach anywhere near Him in these respects.

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Next the raison d'etre of the revelation of the Quran is mentioned in the the words : This is the Perfect Book ; that is to say, this Book is so glorious and ranks so high as it derives from the knowledge and the wisdom of the Eternal Creator. The pronoun (*dhalika*) employed here in the original is one that indicates distance and remoteness. The connotation is that this Book has its origin in the limitless knowledge of that Glorious Being Who is without equal or peer and Whose perfect knowledge and exquisite mysteries are far beyond and above the limits of human insight.

Then its character is eulogized as not admitting of any doubt or misgiving, that is to say, that its contents are so reasoned and patterned that they leave no room for doubt or question of any kind. In other words it does not proceed as a mere narrative or fable like some other books but comprises firm reasoning and irrefutable arguments in support of that which it sets forth so that the mind and intellect are satisfied and reassured. Thus it constitutes a miracle in itself which dispels effectively every kind of doubt and misgiving. In the sphere of cognition of the Divine it does not lead merely to the stage of affirming that there *should be* God but leads to *the certainty and finality that there is.*

Finally the purpose of the revelation of the Quran is described as furnishing guidauce for the righteous. That is to say, this book has been revealed for the guidance of those who by virtue of inner piety, clear reason, sound intellect, eagerness in the search for truth and good motive will ultimately attain to perfect faith, full cognition and complete righteousness. In other words, there is here an indication that those who, within the eternal knowledge of the Divine, are characterised by a

nature which is apposite to Divine guidance and have the capacity of making progress in the appraisal and appreciation of Truth, will ultimately be guided by this Book and that the guidance contained therein is bound to reach them and that they will be enabled thereby to tread along the right path. In effect this comprises a prophecy that those worthy of being guided by virtue of the characteristic of righteousness will surely be led to the guidance contained in this book.

In the succeeding verses it has been further explained that those who within Divine knowledge deserve to be rightly guided will all be gradually led to the guidance and those alone will keep away from it who, within God's knowledge, have no inclination towards the acceptance of truth and are completely impervious to any kind of admonition. Such will not believe nor will they attain to perfect righteousness and perfect cognition of the Divine. Thus it has been clearly set forth that it is only those who are by their nature inclined towards righteousness and whose character is not debased by an innate inclination towards wrong, who will derive benefit from the guidance contained in the Quran and that this guidance will surely reach them; but that those who are not so characterised will derive no benefit from it and that it is not necessary that this guidance may become available to them. (Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya, Part 3, footnote 11, pp. 184—186).

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A book cannot be held to be perfect unless its four principal aspects are perfect. In the opening verses of this chapter Allah has set out the perfection of these four facts of the Quran which are:

(a) its source
(b) its substance
(c) its character, and
(d) its purpose;

the Quran possesses each of these in perfection.

The first verse is: I Am Allah the All knowing, that is to say, I whose knowledge comprises all that is hidden and

manifest have revealed this Book and thus established the perfection of the source of the Quran. God being that source the source is perfect in every respect.

The next verse is : This is the perfect Book, meaning that this Book is surcharged with divine knowledge and it is patent that Allah's knowledge is most perfect and is above and more comprehensive than all other knowledge.

The verse : This Book admits of no doubt or misgiving, that is to say, it is exempt from every kind of mistake or default : establishes the perfection of its character. For there can be no doubt a book that has proceeded from the All-comprehensive knowledge of the divine is peerless in its quality of accuracy and freedom from every default.

The perfection of its purpose is established by its attribute of providing perfect guidance for the righteous, meaning that it guides to the highest standards which the nature of man is capable of attaining.

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(Haqeeqat-ul-Wahy, footnote at pages 133-134).

Allah, the Exalted, has proclaimed the purpose of the Holy Quran to be the guidance of the righteous, that is to say the righteous are specified as those who can derive beneficence and guidance from the Quran.

(Aeena-Kamalat-i-Islam, pp. 139-140).

A person with average intelligence can appreciate that once research investigation have arrived at the stage where the truth becomes fully manifest and every kind of argument and proof points like a shining torch in the same direction, the purpose of research and investigation is fulfilled and a seeker after truth must take a firm stand on the basis of that to which he has been led. No other course is thereafter left open. It is obvious that once a position is fully established on the basis of irrefutable proof and every aspect of it has become clear like a glorious dawn and every facet of truth has emerged clearly, there is no room left for a sane and wise person to

continue in doubt and to be a prey to uncertainty and hesitation. It is only so long as the possibility of mistake is not excluded and all aspects have not been clearly revealed that there is room for contemplation and reflection. Review and revision and checking-up can be called in aid only up to that stage. Once the truth is established beyond doubt it is not the part of wisdom to continue in doubt and distraction. This is not a prolongation of the process of thought and reflection, It is an invitation to insanity. When a person is convinced beyond doubt with regard to the reality or otherwise of a matter he ceases, if he is in his right mind, to continue to doubt whether what he thinks is established may not in fact be so or that which he is convinced has no reality may be otherwise. That possibility may perhaps be open to a mind whose total dependence is upon reason and argument but in the case of those whose reason is supported and strengthened by divine revelation no room is left for doubt or hesitation. Divine revelation leads the seeker to the centre of truth. On the one hand it sets out in their perfection all arguments based on reason, and on the other, being itself beyond and above peer and equal, constitutes irrefutable proof on which faith in God and divine guidance may be based. The degree of certainty to which a seeker after truth arrives through this double process of proof is appreciated fully only by one who seeks after God with the utmost sincerity of heart, and is sought after only by one whose soul yearns for Him.

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Those who like the Brahmoo Samaj, adhere to the fallacy that no book or no human being can be wholly free of default can never attain to this degree of certainty, until, discarding this vicious premise, they embark upon the quest for such certainty. As they continue to proclaim that they have discovered no book which sets forth faultless principles and teachings, this is proof that they possess no sure faith. They do not believe in any of the principles that lead to a true cognition of the Divine. They consider it beyond the bounds of possibility that a book should set forth accurately all that pertains to matters of faith. They

assert that if a book should set forth clearly and positively the existence and unity of the Divine, describing Him as Almighty, Creator, All-Knowing, Wise, Gracious, Merciful and possessing, all perfect attributes free from and above all defaults and shortcoming without beginning or end, not liable to change or mutation, nor possessing an associate, even then it could not be accepted as wholly free from error so as to furnish a firm basis of faith. That is why they reject the Quran. Thus it follows that according to them the very existence, unity and overall might of God are not free from the possibility of doubt. As they confess that there is no book the accuracy of which is not subject to doubt, it is obvious that whatever belief they possess is based on conjecture and that their faith is altogether divorced from certainty.

All this merely confirms that which we have repeatedly set forth both here and elsewhere that reason alone is not capable of furnishing complete satisfaction in matters of the spirit. Thus the Brahmoo Samaj and we are agreed that through following the sole guidance of reason no one can arrive at the certainty of faith. The only point of controversy between us is: Has God created man, as predicated by the Brahmoo Samaj, that despite earnest seeking after complete certainty and the essence of Truth, which is part of his nature, he should fail to achieve his purpose and be balked of it and that his knowledge and cognition should not extend beyond the possibility of error; or has God provided a means for man to achieve complete success in his search for cognition of the Divine and has bestowed upon him a book exempt from the possibility of error?

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Then all praise is due to Allah that the revelation of such a Book by Him has been established by irrefutable proof and by the aid of that Book we have been delivered from the ruin in which the Brahmoo Samaj is floundering. That Book is glorious and holy scripture which is called the Furqan (the Discrimination) which discriminates clearly between truth and

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falsehood and is exempt from every type of error. Its first characteristic is : This is the Perfect Book, exempt from all error. That Book has disclosed to us that God does not desire the ruin of earnest seekers after truth by debarring them from the highest grades of certainty. That Merciful and Munificent One has been so Beneficent towards His week and imperfect creatures that what they could not achieve through the exercise of their faulty reasoning He has bestowed upon them of His grace. He has caused to descend upon man on His own the fruits of the tree, the branches of which were beyond the reach of man's grasp. He has furnished to the seekers after truth and to those hungry and thirsty for it the means of attaining to full and complete certainty. Those thousands of spiritual verities which were scattered throughout the vast expanses of the spiritual heavens like so many particles ; those life-giving waters that were scattered far and wide like dew drops in the unfathomable dark depths of human nature the capturing and collection of which from limitless horizons was beyond the capacity of human reason, nor did man among his weak and limited faculties possess any delicate detecting instrument by the aid of which he could discover and acquire all those delicate and hidden particles of reality which could not be observed through his faculty of vision and for the collection and gathering of which his life-span was anyhow inadequate ; all these gems of wisdom and delicate rays of cognition have been comprehended in this Perfect Book and have been presented to us, without excess or diminution, without omission or forgetfulness through the power and might of God and through the strength and governance of His province, that we may support life through its sustenance and should not fall a prey to death. The wonder is that this treasure is so comprehensive that no aspect of truth and no point of wisdom has been left out, nor has anything been included which would be inconsistent with or contradict any aspect of truth. We have accordingly announced repeatedly, in writing and verbally, to the confusion of all those who deny the truth, that if anyone

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should consider anything contained in the Quran as contrary to the truth or as empty of trnth, let him set forth his objection and we shall by Allah's grace and bounty so demonstrate the excellence of the Quran as to refute his objection completely and to make it clear to him that what he had considered a default is in truth high merit.

(Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya, Vol. IV. pp. 279-282, footnote 11)

It should be remembered that the purpose of *bai'at* (covenant made as token of initiation into the Ahmadiyya Movement) is that the righteous way of life which is adopted in the beginning with an effort should be transmuted into a characteristic of the personality of the initiate through the spiritual attention and emotional reaetions of those who have attained righteousness and perfection. Thereby is generated the light which illumines the heart as a consequence of the ardent communion established between the creature, and his Creator, which the Sufis have also termed the holy spirit. Once this light is generated, disobedince of God becomes as harmful to the creature as it is hateful in the sight of Allah. This not only enables the seeker to achieve a release from all worldly bonds and relationships but everything, save only the Divine Creator and Master, appears as non-existent, and the seeker attains to the stage called : Disappearance of Externals. For the generation of this light the first stage of righteousness which is innate in a sincere seeker is a precondition. As Allah, the Most High, in setting out the purpose of the Holy Quran, has said : It is guidance for the righteous. He did not say : It is guidance for the disobedient ; or : It is guidance for the disbelievers. The first stage of righteousness which entitles a person to be described as righteous is innate in the nature of those inclined towards virtue. The first manifestation of Divine Providence creates, sustains and nourishes it. This is the first birth of a righteous person. The inner light, which has been called the holy spirit, is generated by the complete communion established between the completely obedient and self-surrendering servant aud creature, and the Perfect All-Comprehensive Provi-

dence. This is the second manifestation of Divine Providence which bestows a second birth on a righteous creature, referred to in : Then we developed it into a new creation (23 : 15). The righteous one thus arrives at the angelic stage. Thereafter is the third manifestation of Divine Providence, which is known as the new creation, when the righteous one achieves a third birth and arrives at the stage of disappearance of self.

(Izala Auham Part II, pp. 845-846, footnote).

The Quran has proclaimed that its purpose is to expound the ways of righteousness, as it says : This is the Perfect Book, free from all doubt, a guidance for the righteous. This means that the purpose of this Book is to inform those who keep away from sin of the minutest niceties of evil and sinfulness, so that they should eschew even those types of evil and sin which are not readily perceptible and which are discernible only through the telescope of spiritual insight and are likely to be overlooked at first sight. For instance, it is said in the gospel of Matthew that he who looks lustfully upon a woman has committed adultery with her. But the Quran teaches that one must not look upon a strange woman lustfully or without lust, nor her voice, nor lend ear to descriptions of her beauty and charm. Such restraint is a safeguard against stumbling. KHILAFAT LIBRARY (Nurul Qaran, No. II, pp. 25-26)

This Book which is free from all doubt is a guidance for the righteous. The righteous are defind as those who believe in God (Who is unseen) and raise up the Salat (congregational Prayer) and spend in the cause of Allah out of that which has been bestowed upon them, and believe in the Book which has been revealed to thee (Muhammad) and in the Books which have been revealed before thee. These are the ones who are guided by their Lord and these will attain salvation.

In these verses God has decreed that Salvation is attainable only through belief in Divine Books and worship of Him. There is no contradiction or inconsistency in Allah's word.

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Allnh, the Glorious, having made salvation dependent upon faith in the Holy Prophet, it would be infidelity to discard these express commands and to run after that which is allegorical. This is the way of those whose hearts are afflicted with hypocrisy.

These verses proclaim: This is a Book which has been revealed out of the knowledge possessed by Allah. As His Knowledge does not suffer from any lack or forgetfulness, this Book is free from all doubt and uncertainty. As God's knowledge has full power to lead mankind to perfection, this Book provides complete guidance for the righteous and leads them to the stage which is the climax of the developm·nt of human nature. It defines the righteous as those who believe in God the unseen, raise up the salat and spend in the cause of Allah out of that which has been bestowed upon them. They believe in the Quran and in Books revealed before it. These are the rightly guided and they will attain salvation.

These verses establish that salvation is dependent upon faith in the Holy Prophet and carrying out the injunctions of the Quran concerning the observance of Salat, etc., and that those who seek salvation through adhering simply to belief in the unity of God, forsaking the Holy Prophet, are in grievous error. But the question is raised what is the significance of the claim that this Book is guidance for the righteous who already believe in God the unseen, raise up the Salat, observe the fast, spend in the cause of Allah out of that which has been bestowed upon them and believe in the Quran and the Books that were revealed before them? They are already rightly guided. What further guidance is the Quran designed to furnish them? The answer is that despite faith and good conduct they are in need of achieving the highest grades of steadfastness and spiritual progress to which God alone can furnish guidance and which are not attainable through human effort alone. Steadfastness means that faith should so pervade the heart that no trial should shake it, and that righteousness should become a

source of pleasure and should require no effort or labour nor occasion any distaste or aversion. Righteous conduct should become the sustenance and support of the soul, as if it were its food and drink without which it could not survive. This degree of steadfastness is not attainable through human effort alone. As the soul itself is a bounty of God, such superhuman steadfastness is also achieved as a divine gift.

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The highest stage of spiritual progress is that beyond the faith and acts of worship that represent the climax of human effort, one should attain to a stage which is the gift of God alone. In the matter of faith in the Divine, for instance, the utmost reach of human reason and effort is that one should believe in the existence of God, the unseen. Divine law, therefore, which does not require of any person that which is beyond his capacity, does not obligate a person to acquire through his own unaided effort any higher degree of faith. But the verse: It (the Quran) is a guidance for the righteous; holds out the promise that when a righteous person has been firmly established in the unseen and has carried his own effort to its farthest, then Allah will lead him from the stage of faith to the stage of cognition and realisation, and will bestow a new quality upon his faith. It is a proof of the truth of the Holy Quran that it does not leave those who advance towards it in the stage of faith and conduct which they may have attained through their own effort. For were that so, how would anyone realize that God is? Indeed He signifies His appreciation of human effort by rewarding it out of His own bounty in a manner which flashes forth divine might and power. As already stated, in the realm of faith man, on his own, can only achieve faith in the unseen God to Whose existence every particle of the universe bears witness. He is not able solely through his own effort to obtain observation of the brilliant hues of divine light, or in other words, to transmute his faith into cognition, observation, sight experience.

Again in the performance of the Salat human effort can

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compass only that in a state of physical and moral purity, withdrawing from any diversion and distraction, the worshipper should carry out the act of worship in a manner divorced from passivity, so that all its elements, praise and glorification of the Divine, repentance, seeking forgiveness, supplication, calling down blessings on the Holy Prophet issue forth from the eagerness of the heart. It is not, however, within the power of the worshipper to attain to that degree of lively attention and concentration in the Salat which is evidence of superhuman personal love and devotion and an utter sinking of self, washed of every impurity, in the experience of the Divine, as if he is beholding the face of the Divine. It is obvious that Salat lacks perfection until that stage is reached. That is why the expression employed in the Quran in this context is : those who raise up the Salat. Only that is raised up which has a tendency towards falling or is likely to fall. This means that the righteous person makes every effort, through attention and striving, to raise up the Salat but human effort; unaided by divine grace is apt to fall short. Therefore, the Merciful and Munificent has held out the promise : This Book is a guidance for the righteous. He thereby assures the righteous : Let them strive their utmost by way of righteousness to raise up the Salat, then if they have faith in My Word I shall not leave them merely to their own effort and striving, but shall take them by the hand and shall Myself lead them on, and their Salat shall assume another aspect and they shall experience a new condition of which they have no notion. I shall bestow this grace upon them because they believe in the Quran and occupy themselves, as far as possible, with carrying out the directions contained in it. Thus the further guidance promise concerning the Salat is that the worshipper is granted that degree of eagerness love, devotion and concentration which so sharpens his spiritual vision that he is enabled to behold the refulgent beauty of the External Beloved. That experience saturated with spiritual delight and ecstasy, and

is so alien to and utterly divorced from worldly impurities and all manner of sin and default, through word, deed, sight and hearing that the worshipper's heart utterly rejects these and is filled with loathing of them. As Allah, the Most High, has affirmed : Most surely the Salat safeguards against indecencies and misbehaviour (29 : 46).

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In the same way all the worship that a person can offer in respect of his belongings is that he should spend out of them in the cause of Allah, as Allah, the Most High, has commanded in these verses : They spend out of whatsoever We have bestowed upon them; and at another place: Never will you attain to virtue unless you spend out of that which you love (3.93). But it is obvious that if a person does only that much, namely,spend a portion of his belongings in the cause of Allah, that is no high achievement. The only worth while achievement is that he should withdraw wholly from everything beside God, and whatever he calls his should be not his but God's, so much so that he should be ever ready to lay down his life in the cause of Allah, for life is also bestowed by God. Whatsoever we have bestowed upon them ; is a phrase of the widest import and comprehends not only money and property but every bounty that has been bestwed upon man.

Thus here too the signficance of : A guidance for the righteous ; is that out of every type of bounty bestowed upon him, for instance, life, health, power, prosperity, etc., man, by his own effort, can demonstrate his sincerity only to the extent of spending a portion in the cause of Allah. Human capacity does not extend beyond. But Allah has promised those who believe in the Quran that if they will prove their sincerity up to the point of spending in His cause out of whatsover He has bestowed upon them, He will in pursuance of : A guidance for the righteous ; lead them to the stage of perfection in this respect also. That perfection is that He will bestow upon them the capacity of self-sacrifice to a degree that they will cheerfully recognize that whatever they call theirs is in truth

Allah's, and they would never betray any consciousness that these things by means of which they serve their fellow beings belong to them. Sometimes through a spirit of benevolence a person indicates that he has something that belonged to him. But this is an inferior stage of benevolence. He can entertain such a feeling only so long as he considers that what he gave away belonged to him. But when Allah, according to the promise : A guidance for the righteous ; leads such a one, who believes in the Quran, beyond that stage, he will realize so perfectly that all that is his is truly Allah's that he will be rid even of the consciousness of having been benevolent. He will experience a natural affection and sympathy for his fellow beings like that of a mother for her children, and even stronger. Then nothing will be his ; all will be God's. This will come about only when he believes sincerely in the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet ; not without.

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How greatly mistaken, therefore, are those who hold mere belief in the unity of God as adequate for salvation, thus dispensing with conformity to the Holy Quran and obedience to the Holy Prophet. Experience shows that those who make such a claim have neither sincere faith in God nor can they rid themselves of worldly greeds and desires ; let alone their achieving spiritual perfection in any respect. Moreover, it is utterly wrong to imagine that a person may attain to faith in the unity of God solely through his own efforts. This too is a bounty that can be achieved only through the Word of God. Whatever a person may apprehend on that score entirely on his own is not free from polytheistic notions. Similarly, in the matter of belief in revealed books the limit of human effort is that one should adopt an attitude of righteousness and believe in a revealed book and should follow it steadfastly. No man, on his own, can do more. But God, the Most High, has promised that A guidance for the righteous ; that he who believes in His Book and His Messenger, will be guided to higher stage of spiritual advancement. God will bestow spiritual vision

upon him and will honour him with revelation from Him, and will show him great Signs, so that he will see God in this very life and will be wholly satisfied that He is. God's Word gives the assurance that whoever has perfect faith in it, will perceive it descending upon him also. Thus Hazrat Imam Ja'afar Sadiq (Allah be pleased with him) has said: I have read the Word of God with such Zeal, love and eagerness that my tongue repeated it under revelation also.

(Haqeeqatul Wahy, pp. 132—138)

The translation of these verses is: I am Allah the All-Knowing. This Book which is free from every type of doubt is a guidance for the righteous; those who believe in the unseen, raise up the Salat and spend out of that which We have bestowed upon them. They believe in that which has been revealed to thee and in that which was revealed before thee and have faith in that which is to come. These are the ones who are guided by their Lord, and these are the ones who will attain success.

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Four Characteristics of the Holy Quran :

Everything has four characteristics; its source, its form, its substance and its purpose. These verses describe these four characteristics of the Holy Quran.

The source of this Book is Allah, the All-Knowing. Its substance is the Book revealed by Allah, Whose Knowledge is all comprehensive. Its form is excellent to perfection. It is free from every type of doubt or defect. All its affirmations are well-founded; and every one of its claims is clear and supported by reason. Its purpose is that it guides the righteous.

After setting out these four characteristics, Ailah, the Most High, has defined the righteous for whom the Quran furnishes guidance. The righteous are those who believe in God while He is unseen, raise up the Salat and spend out of whatsoever We have bestowed upon them. They believe in the Book

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which is revealed to thee and in that which has been revealed before thee, and have faith in that which is to come. This raises a question. The purpose of the Book has been mentioned as furnishing guidance for the righteous and the righteous have been defined in terms that indicate that they are pious godly people. For instance, they believe in Allah, perform the Salat, believe in charity, believe in the Book of Allah, have faith in the Day of Judgment. Now, one who does all this and is already termed righteous what guidance can he look forward to finding in this Book, over and above that which he possesses and practises? This shows that the guidance which this Book furnishes has an objective higher than that which characterises the righteous here mentioned. These characteristics are obviously conditions precedent for attaining to the true purpose and object of this Book. That guidance must lead to something far higher than these. That superior purpose has been revealed to me by Allah, the Most High, and I proceed to propound it.

It may recalled that the first characteristic of the righteous that has been mentioned is that they believe in the unseen. This stage in the spiritual development of a believer that he believes in that which he has not seen. The Unseen is an attribute of Allah, the Most High, and it comprises all that is still hidden, for instance, heaven, hell, resurrection, etc. In his elementary stage a believer believes in them on trust. The guidance of the Quran is that he receives a divine bounty in that his belief in the unseen is transmuted into realisation. That which he believed in as unseen now becomes manifest to him. God is no longer unseen for him; he beholds Him through His continuous manifestations. Thus the unseen becomes manifest to him and faith becomes cognition and realisation. He beholds God in this very life, and that is the stage to which the guidance of the Quran leads him. As has been affirmed: He who continues blind in this life will be raisup blind in the Hereafter (17 : 73). This blindness means the failure to witness in this life the manifestation of the Divine and of the phenomenan that are hidden from sight. One who

is still in the stage of belief in the unseen partakes of this blindness but when he is guided in pursuance of the promise : It is a guidance for the righteous ; his blindness is removed and he emerges from this stage and enters the stage in which he experiences the manifestations of that which was hitherto hidden. This progress is made through the guidance furnished by the Quran.

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The second characteristic of the righteous is that they raise up the Salat. A righteous one struggles constantly to raise up the Salat ; It falls and he raises it up again. He performs the Salat in awe of Allah's Majesty, but he is assailed by all kinds of thoughts and fancies which distract him and cause the Salat as it were, to fall down, but every time he raises it up again and this struggle continues till Allah guides him through His Book.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. X, No. 2, 17 January 1906, p. 5)

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